

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS:

This listing will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Previously presented) In a telephony over data network method having one originating gateway, a method of operating said one originating gateway with more than one communications carrier, said method comprising the steps of:

providing said one originating gateway comprising more than one port;

assigning to each of the more than one communications carrier in said network a particular port within said one originating gateway, each assigned particular port being different from each other;

storing indicia in a storage medium accessible to said one originating gateway;

comparing said indicia to data associated with an incoming call; and

connecting said call if one of said indicia matches said data associated with said call, utilizing a carrier server corresponding to said communications carrier associated with said indicia, said carrier server having data associated with said call.

2. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 said step of connecting said call further comprising receiving an IVR script from said server associated with said carrier.

3. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 said indicia comprising at least one digit associated with said incoming call.

4. (Original) The method according to Claim 1 said indicia comprising a PIN.

5. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the number of ports of said originating gateway are equal to or greater than the number of communications carrier.

6. (Original) The method according to Claim 5 said indicia comprising a port identifier.

7. (Previously presented) The method according to Claim 1, further comprising assigning carrier-identifying indicia wherein said step of assigning is performed by a system gateway administrator.

8. (Previously presented) A system portion, comprising:

one originating gateway comprising a plurality of ports and connected to a plurality of communications carriers, each one of the plurality of communications carriers being assigned to a particular port within said one originating gateway, each assigned particular port being

different from each other;

a plurality of communications carrier-identifying indicia stored in a storage medium accessible by said originating gateway;

a means of comparing said indicia to data associated with an incoming call; and

means responsive to one of said indicia matching data contained in said call for connecting said call to a carrier server for authentication, said carrier server being associated with said one of said indicia.

9. (Original) The system according to Claim 8 further comprising a means for receiving an IVR script from said carrier.

10. (Original) The system according to Claim 8 said indicia comprising at least one digit associated with said incoming call.

11. (Original) The system according to Claim 9 said indicia comprising a PIN.

12. (Previously presented) The system according to Claim 10 wherein the number of ports of said one originating gateway is at least as great as the number of communications carriers.

13. (Previously presented) The system according to Claim 12 further wherein said indicia comprising a port identifier.

14. (Previously presented) The system according to Claim 8 further comprising a system gateway administrator and a means for assigning carrier-identifying indicia.

15. (Currently amended) Apparatus for performing authentication, accounting, or authorization ("AAA") functionality, comprising:

a memory for storing communications carrier-identification indicia in association with different carriers;

one receiver at a gateway for receiving incoming calls;

a comparator for comparing data associated with said incoming calls with said carrier-identification indicia for the purpose of authentication, accounting, and/or authorization; and

means for performing ~~at least one of authenticating, accounting for, or authorizing~~ said incoming calls by a third party entity located remotely from the receiver at the gateway, at least one of (i) locally at the receiver and/or comparator, and (ii) remotely via at least one of plural remote carrier servers and/or remote sites,

wherein the receiver, the comparator, the at least one of plural remote carrier servers

and/or remote sites is selected based upon a successful comparison between carrier-identifying indicia and said data associated with said incoming call.

16. (Previously presented) In a telephony over data network system having one originating gateway, a method of operating said one originating gateway to be associated with more than one carrier, said method comprising the steps of:

- providing said one originating gateway with more than one port;
- assigning to each of a plurality of carrier servers in said network a particular port within said one originating gateway, each assigned particular port being different from each other;
- assigning to each port carrier-identifying indicia;
- comparing said indicia to data associated with an incoming call; and
- connecting said call to a server associated with a carrier corresponding to the matching indicia if indicia match data contained in said call.

17. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 16 further comprising software to identify an entity responsible for authenticating the call and to route the call for authentication over a data network to a server associated with said entity.

18. (Previously presented) The method of claim 17 wherein the software identifies the entity by determining at least one of: which port said call arrives, a carrier identifier, one or more digits associated with the call, or out of band information.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16 further comprising software to identify an entity responsible for implementing an IVR script for a call and software to route said call to an IVR server associated with said entity.

20. (Previously presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the software identifies the entity by determining at least one of: which port said call arrives, a carrier identifier, one or more digits associated with the call, or out of band.

21. (Previously presented) A single gateway comprising an interface to convey an IVR script from a remote server to a calling apparatus, the single gateway further comprising a selection means to convey a different script depending upon an identifier associated with a call associated with said calling apparatus, said single gateway further operating to contact at least one of plural servers upon receipt of the call, the at least one server being selected based upon said identifier.

22. (Original) The gateway of claim 21 wherein the identifier comprises at least one of: a carrier identifier, one or more digits associated with the call, or out of band.

23-25. (Cancelled).

26. (Previously presented) In a telephony over data network method having one or more gateways, a method of operating the one or more gateways in communication with one or more third party entities, said method comprising the steps of:

evaluating a call characteristic of the incoming call to determine whether or not authentication, accounting, and/or authorization ("AAA") functions were already performed on the incoming call; and

if the evaluation results in a determination that the one or more AAA functions were not already performed on the incoming call depending on the call characteristic, then at least one of: (i) performing the one or more AAA functions locally at the one or more gateways; and (ii) routing the incoming call to the one or more third party entities, and remotely performing the one or more AAA functions at the one or more third party entities.

27. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26 further comprising, accepting or denying the incoming call based upon one or more result(s) of the one or more AAA functions, wherein the incoming call is at least one of voice, video, or data.

28. (Previously presented) The method of claim 26 wherein:

the call characteristic comprises an arrival port upon which the incoming call arrived; and the evaluating step further comprises:

ascertaining whether or not the arrival port is in at least one of a first set and a second set; and

if the arrival port is in the first set, assuming the incoming call is authorized to be routed, and if the arrival port is in the second set, determining if the incoming call may be accepted for routing by contacting the one or more third party entities.

29. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein said incoming call is accepted or denied based upon one or more result(s) of the one or more AAA functions, wherein said incoming call is at least one of voice, video, or data.

30. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 15 wherein:

said data associated with said call comprises an arrival port upon which said incoming call arrived; and

if the arrival port is in a first set, said incoming call is assumed to be authorized to be routed, and if the arrival port is in a second set, at least one of said receiver, said comparator, and said means for authenticating, accounting, and authorizing operates to determine if the incoming call may be accepted for routing by contacting said one of said plural remote carrier servers and/or remote sites.